



High school basketball action, 9

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2019

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# Charter school wins preliminary approval

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

A charter school advisory board has recommended the state approve a proposal to start one in Perquimans County.

The recommendation, while not unanimous, was made last week according to records by the NC Department of Public Instruction

Office of Charter Schools.

The Elaine Riddick Charter School would start with grades K-4 and then add a grade level every year, reaching eighth grade by the fifth year. Supporters say it would draw on students from Pasquotank and Chowan counties as well. The original plan was to open the school this fall, but the advisory board set

the opening date for August 2020.

Riddick board members have not said where the school will physically be located. One of the goals is 100 percent of parents will volunteer at the school.

The charter school advisory board met Jan. 14-16. The Riddick School proposal was one of 10 the board reviewed.

The state proposal was compiled by Torchlight Academy, a Raleigh-based charter school operator. Torchlight would run the Perquimans school.

At least one member of the advisory board questioned the Torchlight proposal.

"Torchlight Academy growth scores are good for black and economically dis-

advantaged students despite their (School Performance Grade) grade of "C" they are able to demonstrate growth but not for students with disabilities, ELL or Hispanic students," wrote Tracey Kelly, an external evaluator.

"Their achievement scores are flat for all subgroups. Consistently I am concerned by the grade level selection and how

that aligns with the needs of the community. The area needs more high performing middle school seats, but because Torchlight is an expert at growing growth it is in Torchlight's best interest to be able to grow the capacity of children starting at Kindergarten they can demonstrate

See CHARTER, 2

## Grant to bring kids to camp

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

An \$8,000 grant from the North Carolina Community Foundation will mean 250 kids from the Boys & Girls Club in Elizabeth City will get to learn about nature at Camp Cale in Perquimans County this summer.

The Dream Hunting and Fishing program started the effort last summer and hopes to expand it this year. The group provides hunting and fishing trips to children who have serious medical conditions or handicaps. The grant from the HCW-GMW Donor Advised Fund will pay for a program for more mainstream kids.

Some of the 250 kids will just spend a day at Cale fishing, kayaking, canoeing, and learning the rock wall and archery. A select few will get a scholarship to attend Camp Cale for a week.

"We try and show the kids all the things they can do outside," said Terry Boyce, the head of the dream hunting and fishing program. He said Camp Cale was a huge hit with the kids who went last year. Last year's program did not involve the Boys and Girls Club.

Also involved in the grant-fund program with the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Parks and Recreation

See CAMP, 2

## HELPING COAST GUARD



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Woodard's Pharmacy, Coastal Carolina Family Practice and Family Care Pharmacy joined up last week to hold a bake sale and raffle to raise money for the Albemarle Food Bank to help Coast Guard families impacted by the government shutdown. Between the bake sale and monetary donations, \$2,832.61 was raised, or enough to provide 11,428 meals.

## Jones enters hospice

Adams Publishing Group

FARMVILLE — U.S. Rep. Walter B. Jones Jr., who has represented the 3rd District of North Carolina in Congress since 1995, has entered hospice care, according to multiple news sources.

Jones, 75, has been battling an undisclosed illness since last fall. He was granted a leave of absence that has kept him from casting votes in the U.S. House since September.

Adding to his health woes, Jones suffered a fall and broke his hip earlier this month. He underwent surgery at Vidant Medical Center on Jan. 15, according to his office.

Jones first was sworn in to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1995, following 10 years in the N.C. General Assembly. The 3rd District he represents includes the Outer Banks and stretches from areas near the Pamlico Sound down to Wilmington. It includes all area counties,

See JONES, 2

## Area farmers facing choices this spring

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Local farmers coming off a less than stellar year in 2018 may have little to look forward to this year.

A trade war with China has hurt export of U.S. soybeans there and some farmers may opt to plant more of something else this year.

The problem is, prices for the other staple crops, cotton, wheat and corn aren't great.

NC State Soybean Extension Specialist Dr. Rachel Vann said that may be just a matter of how things will be in the future. She expects fewer farmers will plant wheat.

Nationally in 2017, soybean yields were high and some of that crop went to storage bins, Vann said. When the trade war with

China started last year, that meant some of the 2018 crop that couldn't be sold had no place to go. Farmers in all 100 North Carolina counties grow soybeans, but in 2017, Perquimans County ranked eighth, harvesting 2 million bushels. Pasquotank County ranked fifth at 2.5 million bushels.

Growers need to make decisions now, Vann said.

"The reality is growers are already ordering seed now. Some are looking at prices, but they will have to start making decisions as far as land prep soon."

One local farmer was honored last week for his soybean yields.

Perquimans County's John Morgan was congratulated by Vann for winning county honors at the annual Soybean Banquet on Jan. 22. Weather made for a difficult

See FARMERS, 2

## AEMC donors top \$1 million

From Staff Reports

Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation recently surpassed the \$1 million mark in Albemarle Community Trust (ACT) grants awarded to the local community.

Established in 2002, Operation RoundUp enables Albemarle EMC members to voluntarily contribute to the trust through their power bills. Each month their bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar, with the difference going to the Albemarle Community Trust.

The amounts contributed

See AEMC, 2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Perquimans County farmer, John Morgan is congratulated by NC State Soybean Extension Specialist Dr. Rachel Vann for winning county honors at the annual Soybean Banquet on Jan. 22.

## Bicyclists coming to area in April

BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON  
The Chowan Herald

Almost 2,000 bicyclists are scheduled to descend on Edenton in April and the

group putting their visit together could use your help.

Cycle North Carolina will host its Cycle NC Coastal ride April 26-28, with the Edenton serving as the central hub. The rides vary from 10-100 miles in length. Each day of the event, bicyclists will explore different areas of northeastern North Carolina.

A group of local business leaders, government offi-

cials and volunteers along with representatives of Cycle North Carolina representative met Thursday to discuss the three-day event in the town council chambers.

Right now, 1,570 people have registered, said Chip Hoffer, vice president of North Carolina Amateur Sports. He expects 1,700 to 1,800 to sign-up before the registration period is over.

Out of those who are registered, 689 will be camping outdoors at sites organized by the Edenton Chowan Recreation Department. John A. Holmes High School will host 64 indoor campers. The school's back parking lot will serve 75 registered RV that will hold 103 people. Of the rest of those registered 531 will be stay-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Almost 2,000 bicyclists are scheduled to descend on Edenton in April and the group putting their visit together could use your help.

See BICYCLISTS, 2

